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ABSTRACT

A project was designed to help develop resources that support teachers in the implementation of a new K-7 Personal Planning curriculum. The project involved a partnership between the University of Victoria and the Victoria School District. The curriculum focused on students' personal development and on how their schooling and other activities related to their future plans. The curriculum was designed to help students become thoughtful, caring individuals who plan, review, make informed choices, and take responsibility for their career development. The planning process helped students develop personal, career, and educational goals. Preliminary results from administrators, parents, and 6th and 7th grade teachers surveyed indicated that the activities did not present any difficulties. Teachers were more comfortable with the Planning Process and Career Development areas than with the Personal Development area. Schools that tied significant outcomes to the Planning Process had the most success with program development and the participation of the staff and students. (Contains 10 references.) (JDM)

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Implementation of the K-7 Personal Planning Program

Anne Marshall

An ongoing project aimed at developing resources to support teachers in the implementation of the new K to 7 Personal Planning curriculum is desired. Preliminary results indicate adequate availability of resources, but a need for more organization and school-wide planning for delivery.

Elementary schools throughout British Columbia began implementation of the new K-7 Personal Planning (PP) curriculum in September 1996. Few resources were available beyond the basic outlines provided in the 1995 Integrated Resource Package (IRP) to help teachers plan exactly how they would present this new curriculum. to their classes. Common questions asked by teachers have been, "Why is it important to teach this?" and "How do I teach it in my classroom?" Teachers are seeking an understanding of the relevance of this new curriculum to today's world, a coherent delivery plan for implementation, and resource support for their lessons.

The formation of "cross-school work teams" in School District #61, Victoria, over the last four years,has proven to be successful in generating a number of projects to help teachers respond to the many new challenges and initiatives in education. One of these projects was the development of a *Curriculum Delivery Guide* (Charlton, Hall & Future Design Team, 1995-96) for the implementation of Career and Personal Planning (CAPP) in grades 8 to 12.

An ongoing project aimed at developing resources to support teachers in the implementation of Personal Planning at the K-7 level is described in this paper. This project involves a partnership between the University of Victoria and the Victoria School District. Beyond the author, the project team includes two School Services Coordinators, an elementary teacher/administrator, and a graduate student research assistant who is also an elementary teacher. The funding support provided by the University of Victoria Office of Educational Renewal, was matched by the school district.

The team is working on four resource documents for teachers that will be available in the fall of 1997. One resource is a conceptual framework document, or an overview for implementation. This paper will present the ration-

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ale, philosophy, structure and organization, or the "why" of the Personal Planning program. The second resource is a Delivery Guide, similar to the one which already exists for CAPP grades 8 to 12. Supplementing this new K to 7 Delivery Guide will be two further resources for implementation with a focus on "the how". One will be a list of recommended PP resources that are currently available in schools, and the other will be a list of teachers, parents, and other community members who will be able to act as consultants and mentors in the implementation of the PP program.

Theoretical Framework

Educators have long recognized that emotional and social growth are as important to the development of healthy, active and educated citizens as academic and physical growth. Consistent with this belief, many changes and recommendations have been incorporated into curriculum documents during the last decade in British Columbia. The current Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Plan also supports the commitment to the development of well-rounded, balanced individuals. The Personal Planning K to 7 and Career and Personal Planning 8 to 12 curricula are intended to help students become thoughtful, caring individuals who plan, review, make informed choices, and take responsibility for their lifelong personal and career development.

This type of holistic approach is reflected in theories of personal and career development such as Kegan's Constructive Development (1982) and Super's Life-Span Life-Space Approach (1990), as well as in a number of constructivist approaches (Carlsen, 1988; Mahoney, 1991; Peavy, 1993). These theories and approaches all emphasize the importance of experiential learning and the role of meaning in people's lives, notions that are critical components of the PP and CAPP curricula. The challenge for educators is to translate these concepts into specific teaching activities to complement and supplement the core curriculum areas such as mathematics and language arts.

The Personal Planning Curriculum

The overall purpose of the Personal Planning curriculum is on students' personal development, and on how their schooling and other activites relate to their future plans. "The aim of PP K to 7 is to enable students to become thoughtful, caring individuals who plan and reflect, make informed choices, and take responsibility for their own personal and career development" (BC Ministry of Education, 1995, p. 2). The aim and the organization are the same for the Career and Personal Planning IRP, grades 8 to 12.

The PP curriculum consists of three interrelated elements or "organizers". Each one includes several important sub-organizers.

- The Planning Process helps students develop personal, career and educational goals and work towards realizing them. It includes:
  - collecting information
  - making plans and decisions
  - implementing and monitoring

- Personal Development helps students acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to lead healthy and productive lives. It includes:
  - healthy living
  - mental well-being
  - family life education
  - child abuse prevention
  - substance abuse prevention
  - safety and injury prevention

- Career Development helps students integrate personal, educational, work, and community learning experiences to prepare for future career choices. It includes:
  - career awareness
  - career exploration
  - career preparation

Attached to each sub-organizer are a number of specific "Learning Outcomes." The original 1995 Personal Planning IRP had over 250 Learning Outcomes. This number will be reduced in an updated version of the IRP.

The Implementation Project

In the late fall of 1996, a survey in the Victoria District identified a number of schools that were interested in participating in the project. Response data from this survey was used to choose six schools. Criteria for inclusion included: identification of PP implementation in 1996-97 School Initiated Plans; initial steps taken toward PP implementation strategies; commitment from school administration and/or teachers to join the PP Advisory Committee; and previous participation in programs and projects related to PP goals, such as the *BC Life Skills Program* (1996) or *The Real Game* (1995).

Semi-structured interview guides were developed. There were three versions, one for administrators and teachers, one for students and one for parents. The interview questions were designed to assess the following areas: awareness

of and support for the PP Program; application of lessons to IRP learning outcomes; content relevancy; delivery issues; participation and involvement; methods of evaluation and reporting; and general comments about Personal Planning.

The first phase of this project involves the upper elementary grades, mostly grades six and seven. At each participating school, the administrators, all of the grade 6 and 7 teachers, and a sample of students as well as parents were invited to participate. Data from the interviews is being used to develop the resource documents: the Implementation Overview; the Delivery Guide; the resource list; and the consultant/mentor list.

Preliminary Interview Results

At this time, interviews have been completed with most administrators and grade 6/7 teachers, and a small number of parents and students. Several themes are emerging from their responses.

- Personal Planning activities are not a major problem. There are many excellent learning resources, community speakers, books, and videos available. Cost and accessibility are issues. Some materials are expensive and this necessitates sharing. Another issue that surfaced is a lack of Canadian content.

- Responses from teachers indicated that they are generally more comfortable with the Planning Process and Career Development areas than with Personal Development, particularly the family life and healthy living components. Some teachers resolve this dilemma by having "experts" such as counsellors or guest speakers cover these topics. Others use videos or worksheets from already published resources covering topics such as family values or substance abuse.

- The extent of PP implementation is variable. Some schools are doing quite a lot, while others are doing as little as possible. Those schools which have been part of early initiatives within the district and/or which have keen resource people and as a result possess detailed or thorough implementation plans. Schools that have tied the significant outcomes to PP are the most successful with respect to program development and the participation of staff and students.

- The overall philosophy and intent of the program does not seem to be well understood by teachers and parents. Teachers have been concentrating on techniques or specific lessons, rather than on an integrated approach or a "school plan" for all grades.

- Some of the programs, as is the case for parts of the career programs, are too extensive for one grade level. Some schools, for example, are delivering *The Real Game* (a life-career simulation) over two years, grades 6 and 7. This necessitates sharing and cooperative planning among teachers.

- Since informing parents is vital for acceptance and involvement, communication with parents needs to be improved. There exists a definite need for a district "sensitive issues" policy. It is currently being drafted.

- Assessment of the learning outcomes varies greatly from school to school. Some teachers assign grades to work in PP, others use pass/fail. Teachers are unsure how to assess some assignments, such as journals and plans for the future. More assistance and in-service activities are needed in this critical area.

Future Steps and Potential Applications

The interviewing and information gathering process will continue with the senior grades and will subsequently include the intermediate and primary grades. The outcome of this project will be to provide teachers with four key resource components:

- a description of the conceptual framework forming the basis of the *K to 7 Personal Planning Program*,
- a curriculum delivery guide to support the implementation of the program,
- a list of resources already available in schools that meet some of the requirements of the program, and
- a list of teachers and community people available to act as consultants and mentors in specific topic areas.

These components will form the base of a more comprehensive resource that will include curriculum organizers, specific lesson plans, assessment strategies, reporting alternatives, and a directory of resource people. This constitutes Phase II of this project, and it is hoped that this will be a cooperative venture with the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training. The resultant comprehensive resource is intended to be used in workshops and other in-

service activities for teachers and administrators.

These resources will be of interest to elementary schools, school boards, independent educational organizations, parent advisory committees, and community groups in the province of British Columbia. Much of the documents would also be relevant for similar interest groups in other Canadian provinces. The results from the interviews and the resource documents will also be appropriate for inclusion in college and university courses, and in programs that deal with teacher preparation, personal growth and development, and career development.

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